

Family Group Conferencing

- Allows family groups to lead decision making for the care of their children;
- is a group decision-making process;
- widens the circle to include everyone in the “family group” as defined by the family, and
- makes sure all information needed for planning for your children’s safety, possible placement, and well-being is shared with the entire family group.



SC Families First Preserving families, restoring their future.



Anyone, including family members, Guardian Ad Litems, counselors, school staff, etc. that knows of a family with children in foster care may suggest a referral for a Family Group Conference (FGC). Simply contact the DSS service worker and request a referral.

For additional information,
please contact the
National Youth Advocate Program:
800-686-8958

SC Families First
has partnered with National Youth
Advocate Program, Inc. to deliver Family
Group Conferencing services.



DSS
Serving Children and Families

South Carolina ***Families First*** **Family Group Conference**



SC Families First is an initiative of the
SC Department of Social Services

What is Family Group Conferencing?

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) believes families are often best able to make decisions about their own family. With the support of South Carolina DSS and the community, the family will create their own plan. It will make sure the needs of the emotional / physical safety and well-being of their children are met.



How is FGC different?

It's YOUR decision. Being part of a FGC is up to you. In FGC, the family comes together and will work with a neutral person, a coordinator, who helps you with your family meeting.

It's YOUR family. The FGC tries to include as many of your family members, friends, community members, and helping professionals as possible. The family decides who is "family."

It's YOUR plan. Together your family members will address areas of strengths, concerns, and how to keep your children and other family members safe.

How Does It Work?

Step 1: A FGC will be required within a few weeks after the Family Team Meeting. It's also available for families whose children have been in care for some time, and for families whose children are at risk of entering the state's custody.

Step 2: Either the FGC will be scheduled during the FTM meeting or your DSS worker will make a referral to one of our partnering agencies, who will select a coordinator to work with you.

Step 3: The coordinator meets with the family to learn about them and to make a list of people to invite to the meeting. This can include family, friends, and other supports. A date, time, and place are set for the meeting.

Step 4: The coordinator will contact the people to be invited. The family is also encouraged to contact anyone on the list.

Step 5: The coordinator will review the purpose and goals of the meeting with everyone they invite.

Step 6: The family group plans a menu of food to share with one another at the conference.

Step 7: The family conference is held and the Family Plan is made.

Step 8: A follow-up meeting may be held at a later time.

Why Does It Work So Well?

We believe in the power of families, and that:

- Children have a right to keep their kinship and cultural connections throughout their lives
- Children and their parents belong to a wider family system that loves them and takes care of them.
- The family group is the best place to discuss your child's needs, and for problem-solving.
- Family groups know their own family's story, and they use that information to build a good plan for success.
- Having family groups take an active part in leadership can give the best outcomes for children.



It is important that we get to know you and your family group and we look forward to meeting them all at the FGC.